



Contact: Louella Nahsonhoya
Public Information Officer
Phone: (928) 734-3104
Cell: (928) 797-9946
Fax: (928) 734-6665
lnahsonhoya@hopi.nsn.us
www.hopi-nsn.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2010

Hopi Chairman Shingoitewa orders flags to be flown at half-mast in honor of late Hopi Code Talker Rex Pooyouma

"We are saddened to hear the news of the passing of one of our World War II veterans."

– Hopi Chairman LeRoy N. Shingoitewa

KYKOTSMOVI, Ariz. – Hopi Tribal Chairman LeRoy N. Shingoitewa ordered flags on the Hopi Reservation to be flown at half-staff today from Oct. 25 through Oct. 27 in recognition and honor of the late Hopi Code Talker Rex Pooyouma of Hotevilla, Ariz., who died on Saturday, Oct. 23. He was 93 years-old and he was born on June 20, 1917.

The Office of the Chairman and the Hopi Tribal Council was notified by Eugene Talas, director of the Office of Hopi Veterans Services of Pooyouma's passing.

"We are saddened to hear the news of the passing of one of our World War II veterans," Shingoitewa said. "In respect to his services to our great Nation and to the Hopi Tribe, the Hopi Tribal Council requested flags be flown at half-mast. We send our condolences and prayers to his family."

"It is with sadness that I inform you of the death of Mr. Rex Pooyouma in the early morning of Saturday, Oct. 23," Talas stated. "He was laid to rest later the same day at his home village of Hotevilla. We wish to extend our sincere sympathies and prayers to the family members on the passing of Pooyouma, who was a quiet and revered Hopi."

Pooyouma was identified as a Hopi Code Talker earlier this summer and he was part of a secret Native American Code Talker Communications Network assigned to the 380th Bombardment Group, V Bomber Command, Fifth Air Force in the U.S. Army Air Force in the Pacific Region during World War II.

According to Talas, Pooyouma was the last of 10 Hopi Code Talkers who were credited for saving the lives of numerous soldiers by using their Hopi language to communicate secret-coded messages in combat. Their heroic actions and secret operations contributed to the final victory in the Pacific and eventually to the successful end of World War II.

Pooyouma was honorably discharged in November 1945 with the rank of Private First Class. His World War II military medals included: the World War II Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one Bronze Star and a Good Conduct Medal.



Hopi Code Talker Rex Pooyouma of Hotevilla, Ariz., died on Oct. 23, 2010. He is pictured here at the 2008 Tuhisma Art Market when he was honored as the Elderly Artists. He was well-known for making Hopi moccasins. (Photo courtesy of Hopi Veterans Services)

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